



The Queen's Award
for Voluntary Service

The MBE for volunteer groups

The Queen's Award for Voluntary Service: *Background*

The Queen's Award for Voluntary Service, the MBE for volunteer groups, recognises the outstanding contributions made to local communities by groups in the UK, Channel Islands and Isle of Man voluntarily devoting their time for the benefit of others.

This is the highest national honour that can be bestowed upon groups of this kind. As such, The Queen's Award for Voluntary Service not only serves to provide recognition of volunteer groups, but also demonstrates the high respect in which volunteering is held.

The Award is overseen by the Office of the Third Sector (OTS). As part of the Cabinet Office, the OTS leads work across government to support the environment for a thriving third sector (voluntary and community groups, social enterprises, charities, cooperatives and mutuals), enabling it to campaign for change, deliver public services, promote social enterprise and strengthen communities.

More than 750 groups around the UK have now won The Queen's Award for Voluntary Service, since it was created by Her Majesty to mark the occasion of her Golden Jubilee in 2002.



Multiple Sclerosis Centre – Lochgilphead, Mid-Argyll

The centre aims to improve the quality of life of local people affected by MS and other debilitating conditions, giving access to specialist, therapeutic services. The group of more than 40 volunteers provides a valued community resource, offering physiotherapy, yoga and dance movement therapy, as well as confidential listening and befriending support.



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Nomination Process

How to nominate a group

Nominations can be submitted at any time throughout the year. However, for groups to be considered for the following year's Award, applications should be submitted by 30th September.

- 1) Nomination forms may be downloaded in pdf format from The Queen's Award for Voluntary Service website www.direct.gov.uk/thequeensawardforvoluntaryservice or requested in hard copy from The Queen's Award for Voluntary Service office.
- 2) All parts of the nomination form must be completed (this can be with the help of members of the group) and signed by the nominator. Self nomination is not permitted – the nominator cannot be part of the group (e.g. an active member or trustee).
- 3) The completed form must be sent to The Queen's Award for Voluntary Service Administrator with two signed letters of support from independent people.

Groups must satisfy **all** of the following criteria to be eligible for the Award:

- The group has been operating for 3 or more years, continuously
- The group consists of more volunteers than paid staff
- The group is based in the UK and its beneficiaries are in the UK, Channel Islands, Isle of Man or abroad
- Members of the group have a legal right to reside in the United Kingdom
- The group meets a particular need and provides high-quality, voluntary activities
- The group is well respected locally and by beneficiaries



basketballpaisley – Paisley

basketballpaisley is a community organisation supporting the needs of young people by improving opportunities and reducing crime. The group has made a significant impact on thousands of young people throughout Renfrewshire and East Renfrewshire, providing a family-orientated basketball programme to improve life chances.

The nomination process



- 1) A nominator completes and submits a nomination form to The Queen's Award for Voluntary Service Administrator.
- 2) Nominations for eligible groups are sent to the Lord-Lieutenants and Lieutenant Governors to be assessed by County Panels and Devolved Administration Panels.
- 3) The panels make initial recommendations, based on their knowledge of local volunteer activity and need, after assessing nominated groups in their area. This involves a visit to see the group's work in action.
- 4) A Scottish Government panel will review the groups recommended by the Lord-Lieutenants. Following a meeting they will draw up a list of groups they wish to recommend and prepare citations for each of these groups.
- 5) Recommendations are received by a national committee made up of experts in the Third Sector, and high profile individuals. The committee proposes the final selection of winners for any given year to the Minister for the Third Sector, who makes a recommendation to The Palace for Her Majesty's approval.
- 6) Winners are announced on June 2nd every year, after the Award Administrator has notified groups of their success.



Lochside Theatre – Castle Douglas

This professionally-equipped theatre in Dumfries and Galloway is managed and staffed entirely by part-time volunteers. Developed especially for local amateur drama and musical groups, the theatre provides performance facilities to deliver a varied programme that suits the needs of the community.



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Materials for download

Nomination form

Nomination forms can be downloaded in pdf format from the 'Nominating a group' section of The Queen's Award for Voluntary Service website www.direct.gov.uk/thequeensawardforvoluntaryservice, or requested in hard copy from The Queen's Award for Voluntary Service office.

The image shows a preview of the nomination form. It is titled 'Nomination form' and includes several sections: 'Ethnic origin' with a grid for selecting backgrounds, 'Group you are nominating' with a text box for the group name, 'Name and contact details of group' with fields for name, address, phone, and email, and 'Name of group leader or main contact in the group' with fields for name and position. There are also checkboxes for 'Do at least half the volunteers have the right of residence in the UK?' and 'Do you think that I have read and understood the eligibility criteria and that I believe this group meets them?'. The form is presented as a digital document with a light purple background.



Promotional flyer

A double-sided A5 Queen's Award for Voluntary Service flyer is also available for download in printable format from the 'Nominating a group' section of the website.



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Frequently asked questions

What is The Queen's Award for Voluntary Service?

The Award is the MBE for volunteer groups and the highest honour that can be bestowed upon groups of two or more people in the UK (including the Channel Islands and Isle of Man) who are giving their time freely for the benefit of others.

Can a group win the Award more than once?

No, once a group has won, and still retains its same title and place in the community, it remains as a recipient of The Queens Award for Voluntary Service for the life of the group and should not be nominated again.

Do groups have to be volunteering in certain fields to win the Award?

A very broad range of groups have been recognised for their high standards in volunteering, across the following categories: Creche/Playgroup, Playscheme/Youth Group, Environment/regeneration, Educational, Health, Recreation – sports/arts/heritage, Self help/support group, Social preventive scheme (e.g. crime prevention groups), Social centre/Community, Emergency response.

What do winners receive?

As well as the significant prestige and recognition that comes with winning the Award, winners also receive a certificate signed by The Queen and a commemorative crystal for display at their place of operation, at a presentation made by the Lord-Lieutenant of their county. Winning groups are also able to display the Award logo on their communications materials to underline their achievement.

How can groups be considered for the Award?

Groups must be nominated, for example by beneficiaries of their work, members of the public, or representatives of public bodies.

What's the closing date for nominations?

There is a rolling nominations process, meaning that nominations can be made at any time and there is no deadline for the receipt of nomination forms. However, for groups to be considered for the following year's awards, applications should be submitted by 30th September.

Are there any tips for nominators to give a group a better chance of winning?

Some basic points would be:

- Has the group acknowledged and filled a clear local need to improve the social, economic or environmental well being of the area?
- Has the group evolved locally and is it run day to day by local people?
- Has the group generated a high level of goodwill and respect among the community and those it serves?
- Has the group overcome significant obstacles outside its control, showing determination and commitment to bringing benefit to those they wish to help?

What happens to unsuccessful nominations?

If a group is not successful in winning an Award in the year that it is nominated, it can then be placed in the rolling nominations pool for up to three years, allowing it to be reconsidered for an Award.

How many Awards were made in 2009?

After careful consideration, 95 groups were given the Award in 2009 including 11 from Scotland. This was judged to be an appropriate number to acknowledge the diversity of voluntary groups nominated, recognise those that are making an outstanding contribution and ensure a meaningful spread of Awards across the UK by area and type of group.

Do winners receive any money?

No. Award recipients are recognised for their excellence in volunteering through the prestige of winning the Award and with the certificate and crystal which are received by winners.

Do the winners get to meet The Queen?

Four representatives from each winning group in Scotland are invited to a garden party at the Palace of Holyroodhouse, where they are likely to meet either the Queen or a member of the Royal Family.

What are the benefits of winning the Award?

- Recognition and awareness of a group's work
- Increase in new members and volunteers
- Greater local and national publicity
- Pride and motivation for the volunteers



The Wick Society

The society works to save as many of the buildings and artefacts of the Wick area as possible. Its Heritage Museum is run almost entirely by volunteers, who maintain the gardens and exhibitions, documenting the town's social and family history through photographic and memorabilia displays.



Template Press Release

The following template press release has been created to assist Local Authorities in promoting nominations for outstanding voluntary groups in their communities.

Please get in touch with The Queen's Award for Voluntary Service team if you would like details of previous winners from your area, to tailor the information as appropriate for internal communications channels and/or local media.

Local Authority Template Press Release

PRESS RELEASE: [INSERT DATE]

[INSERT FULL NAME AND HONOURS, IF APPROPRIATE], the [INSERT TITLE] of [INSERT YOUR AREA (E.G. FIFE) HERE] **calls for nominations for prestigious volunteering Award**

The [INSERT TITLE] of [INSERT LOCAL AUTHORITY AREA], [INSERT NAME] today called on the local community to celebrate the work of volunteer groups in the area, by nominating them for The Queen's Award for Voluntary Service.

This prestigious National Honour – the MBE for volunteer groups – sets the national benchmark for excellence in volunteering. It recognises the outstanding contributions made by voluntary organisations devoting their time for the benefit of others in their communities.

[INSERT NAME], the [INSERT TITLE] said: "Voluntary groups across [INSERT LOCAL AUTHORITY AREA] are vital to all aspects of community life, however, they sometimes aren't recognised for the huge difference they make.

"The Queen's Award for Voluntary Service celebrates the work of voluntary groups across the UK who, in many cases, have dedicated themselves to improving local people's lives for many years. If there is a group in your area that makes a significant impact and deserves recognition, get out there and nominate them."

More than 750 groups around the UK have now won the Queen's Award for Voluntary Service, including 85 in Scotland, over the seven years since it was created by Her Majesty to mark the occasion of her Golden Jubilee in 2002.

Winners include [INSERT NUMBER OF GROUPS THAT HAVE WON FROM YOUR LOCAL AUTHORITY AREA] from [INSERT LOCAL AUTHORITY AREA].

Nominations can be made at any time of the year, by members of the public who have been helped personally by a group or witnessed the benefits of its work in their community. Visit www.direct.gov.uk/thequeensawardforvoluntaryservice to download a nomination form or to find out more about previous winners.

– Ends –

For media enquiries including case studies of winners in your area, please call 020 7781 2300 or email queensawardmedia@consolidatedpr.com

For enquiries relating to nomination forms or the Award process, please contact:
Tamara Cummings-John
020 7781 2330 or tamaracj@consolidatedpr.com

[INSERT CONTACT NAME, TELEPHONE NUMBER AND EMAIL ADDRESS HERE]

Notes to editors

About the Queen's Award for Voluntary Service

In 2002, in celebration of Her Majesty's Golden Jubilee, the Queen's Golden Jubilee Award for Voluntary Service by Groups in the Community was established. Its purpose is to recognise groups of individuals who are giving their time freely for the benefit of others. It is the highest honour that can be bestowed upon groups of this kind and is equivalent in status to the MBE. As such, the Queen's Award not only serves to provide recognition of volunteer groups, but also demonstrates the high respect in which volunteering is held.

The Award is overseen by the Office of the Third Sector (OTS). As part of the Cabinet Office, the OTS leads work across government to support the environment for a thriving third sector (voluntary and community groups, social enterprises, charities, cooperatives and mutuals), enabling it to campaign for change, deliver public services, promote social enterprise and strengthen communities.

Groups must be nominated for the Award – self nomination is not permitted. A group (two or more people) can be nominated if it is based in the UK, the Channel Islands and the Isle of Man. The group has to have been volunteering for the benefit of people in the UK or overseas for at least three years and more than half its members must be volunteers who have the right of residence in the UK. Further details on entrance criteria and the nomination process are available from www.direct.gov.uk/thequeensawardforvoluntaryservice.



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Contact Details

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